SHADOW THE DEER
Theresa Radcliffe
Illustrated by John Butler

*E*very moment in nature can bring danger and adventure. For a young fawn waiting for his mother as night falls in the forest, a hungry enemy is never far away.

Drawn from the author's study of nature and wildlife, this portrayal of the relationship between a fawn and his mother and their fight for survival makes a dramatic picture book, beautifully illustrated by top wildlife artist John Butler.

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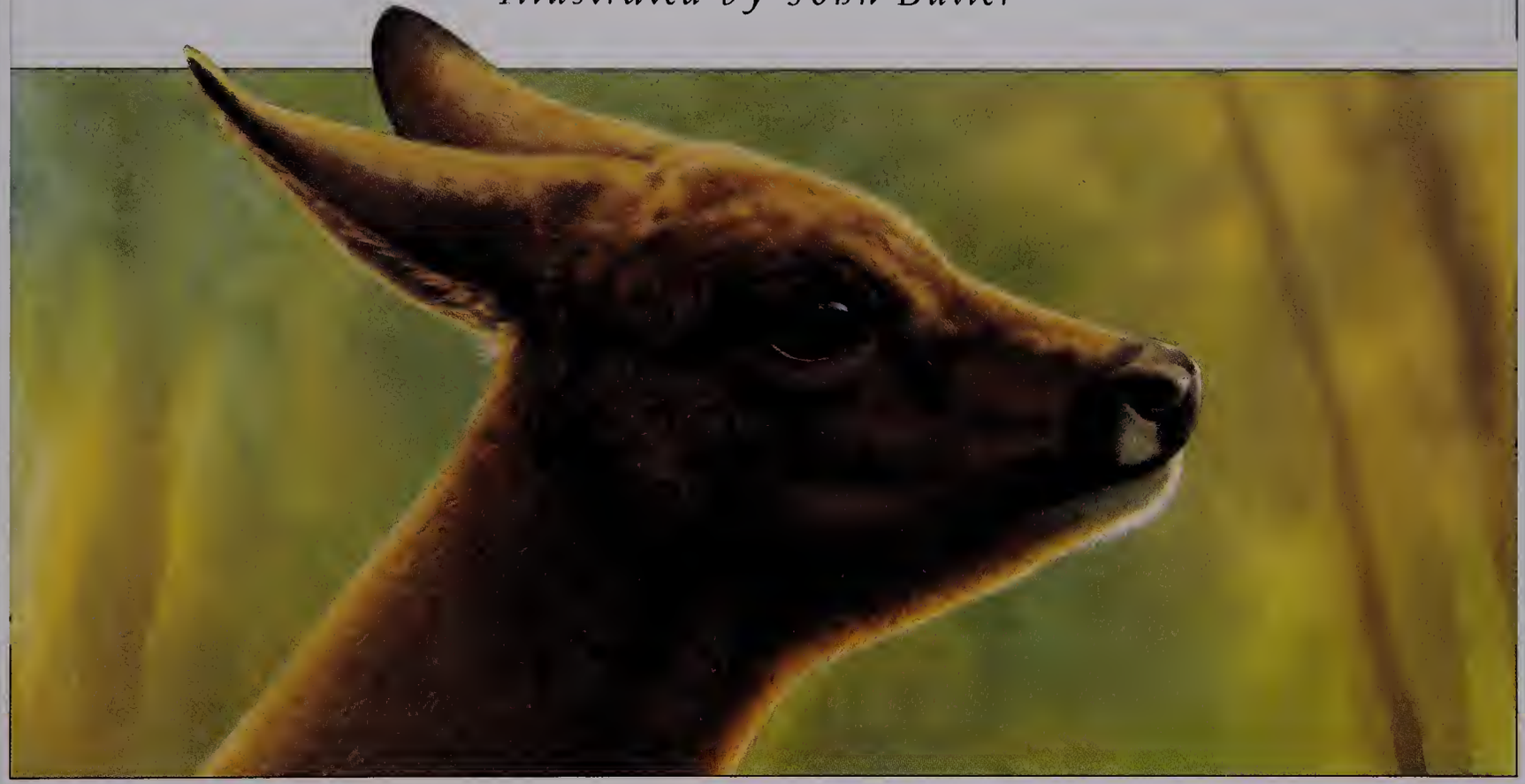

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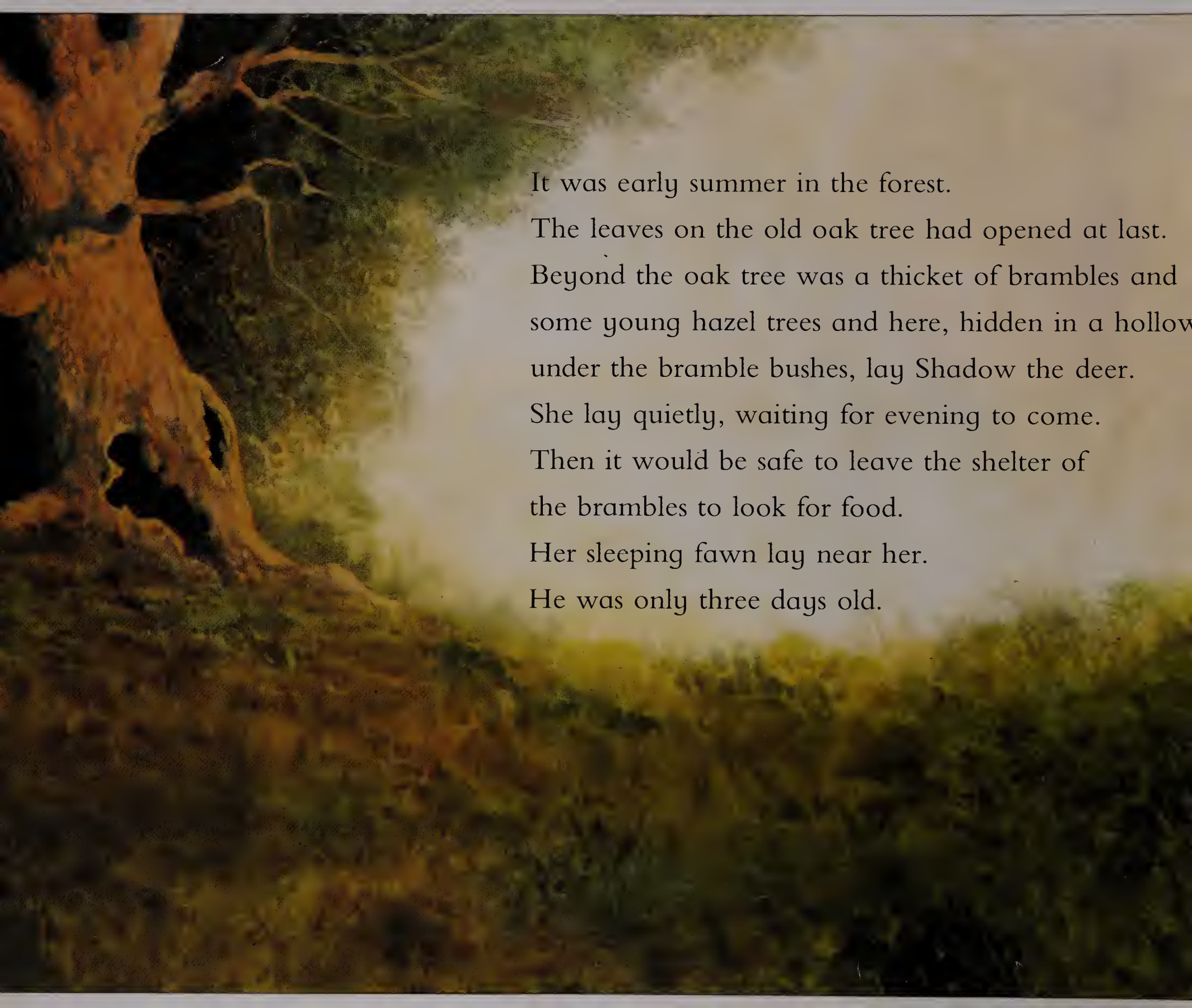
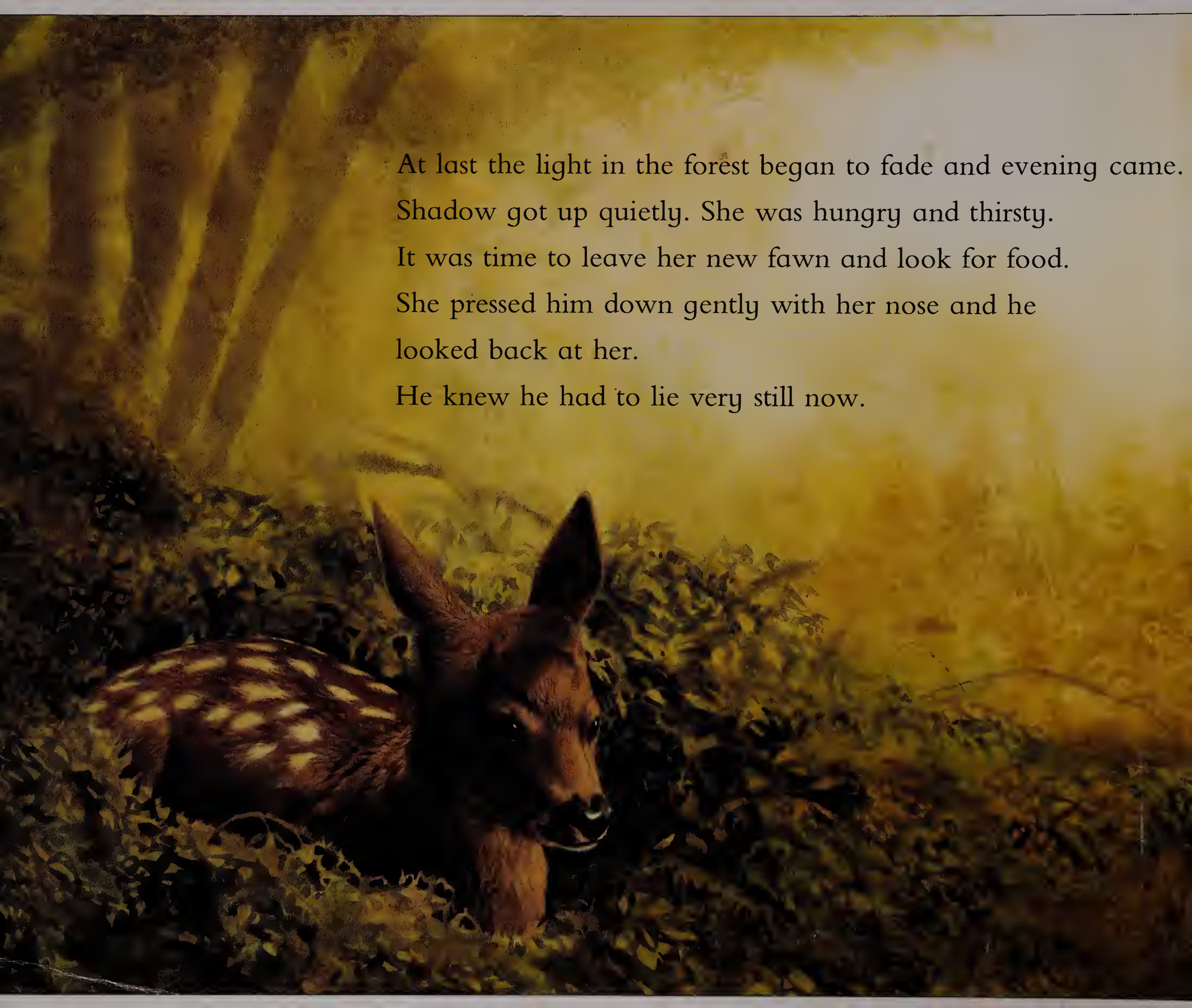
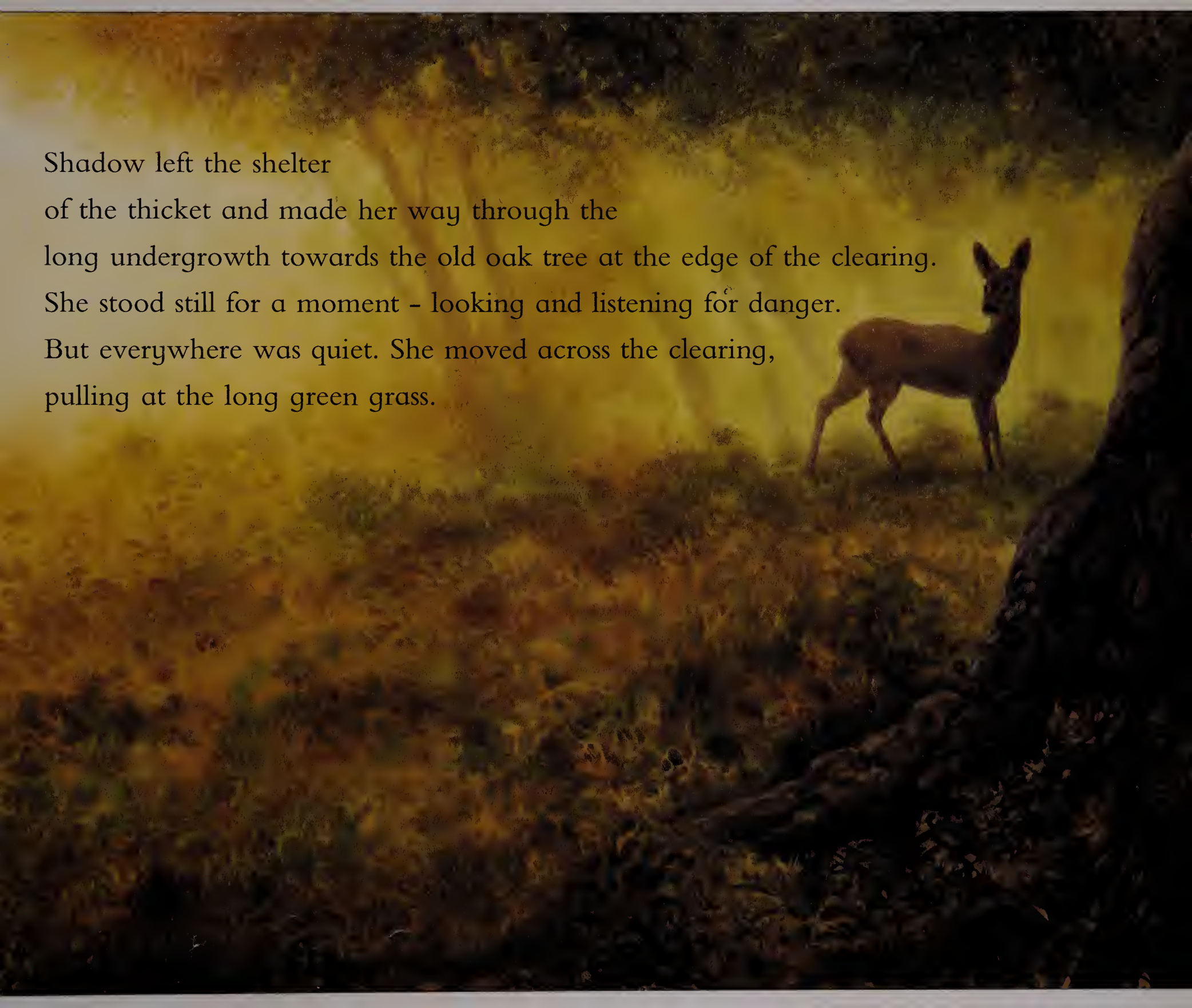


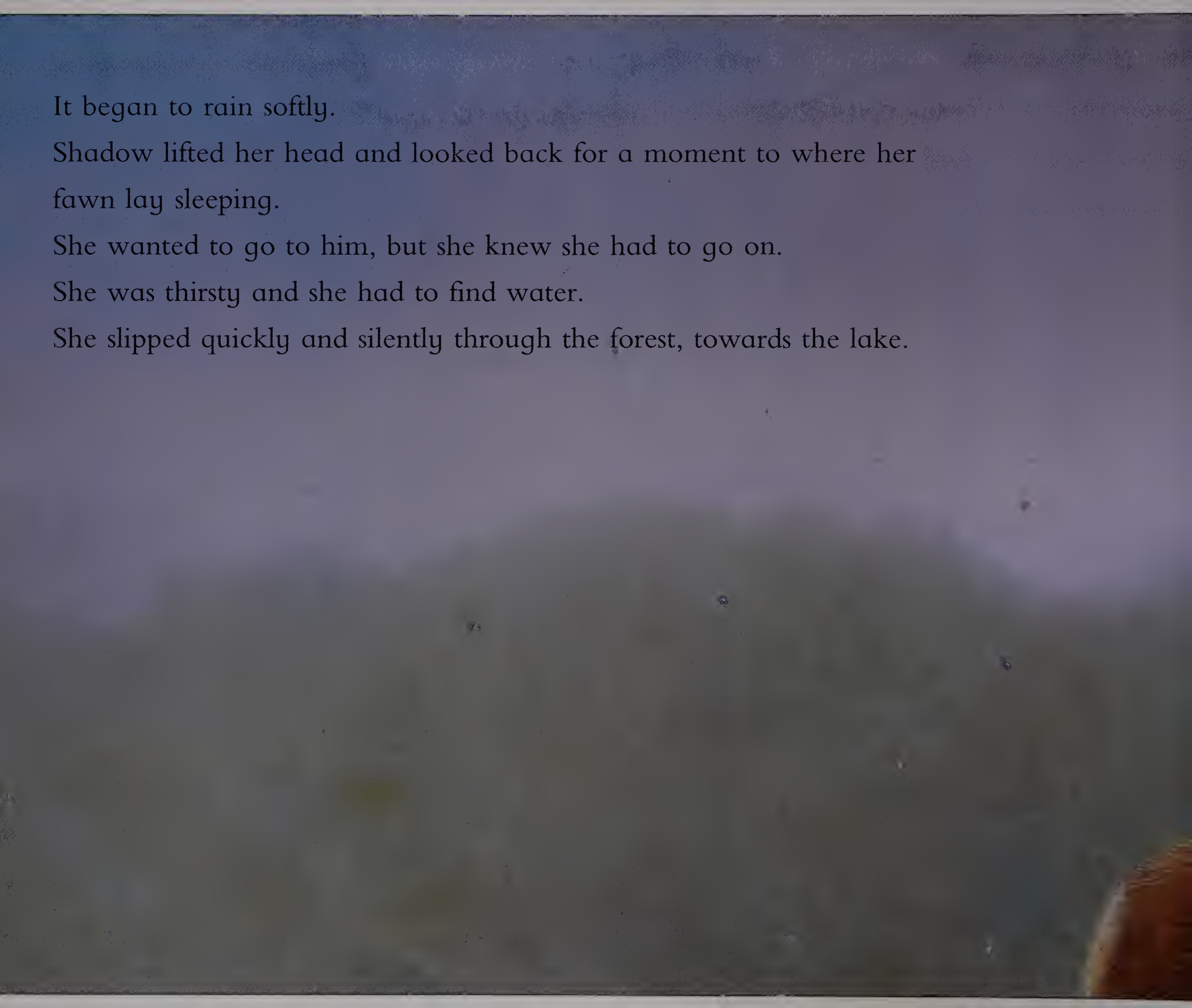
It was early summer in the forest.
The leaves on the old oak tree had opened at last.
Beyond the oak tree was a thicket of brambles and
some young hazel trees and here, hidden in a hollow
under the bramble bushes, lay Shadow the deer.
She lay quietly, waiting for evening to come.
Then it would be safe to leave the shelter of
the brambles to look for food.
Her sleeping fawn lay near her.
He was only three days old.



At last the light in the forest began to fade and evening came.
Shadow got up quietly. She was hungry and thirsty.
It was time to leave her new fawn and look for food.
She pressed him down gently with her nose and he
looked back at her.
He knew he had to lie very still now.

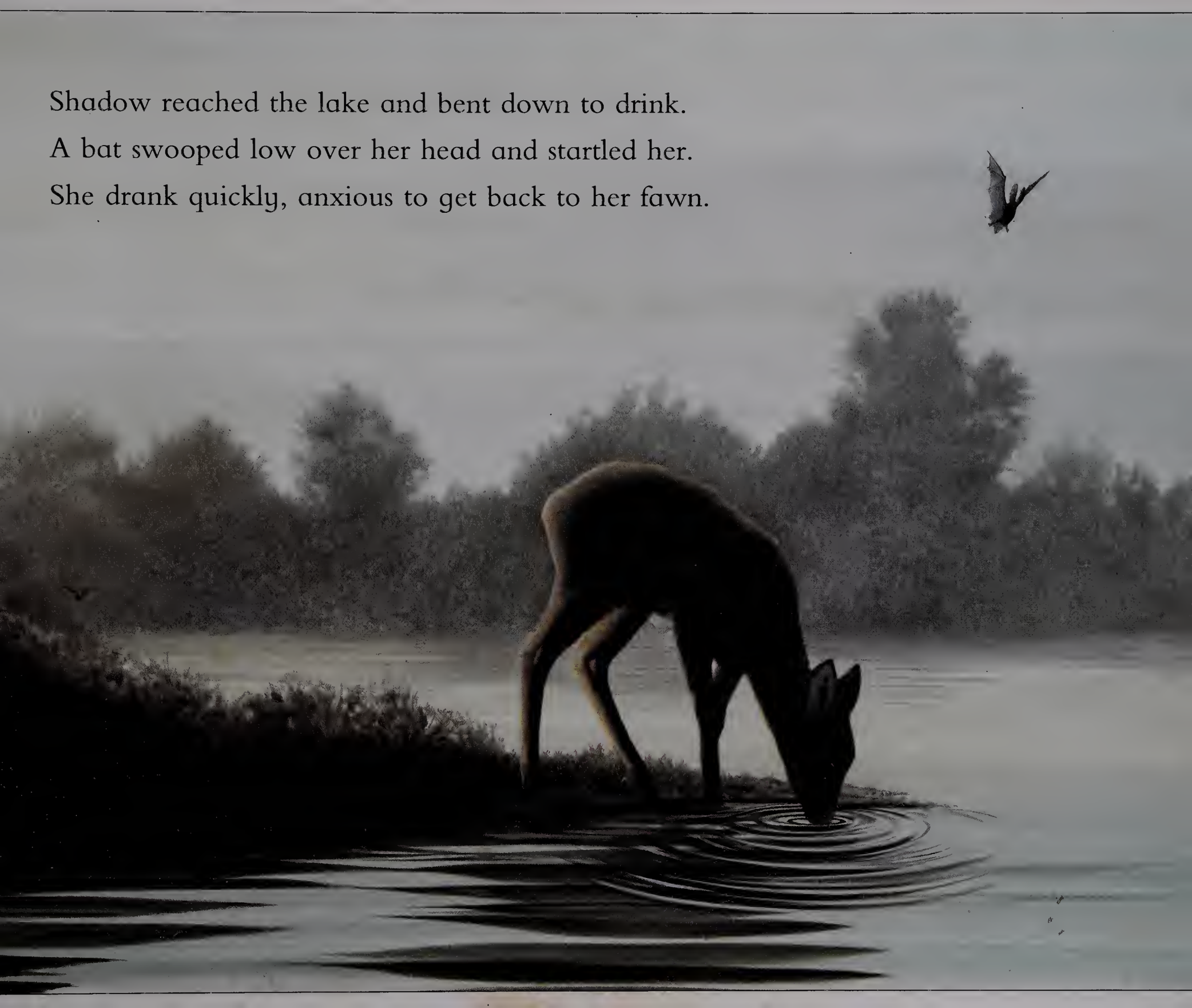


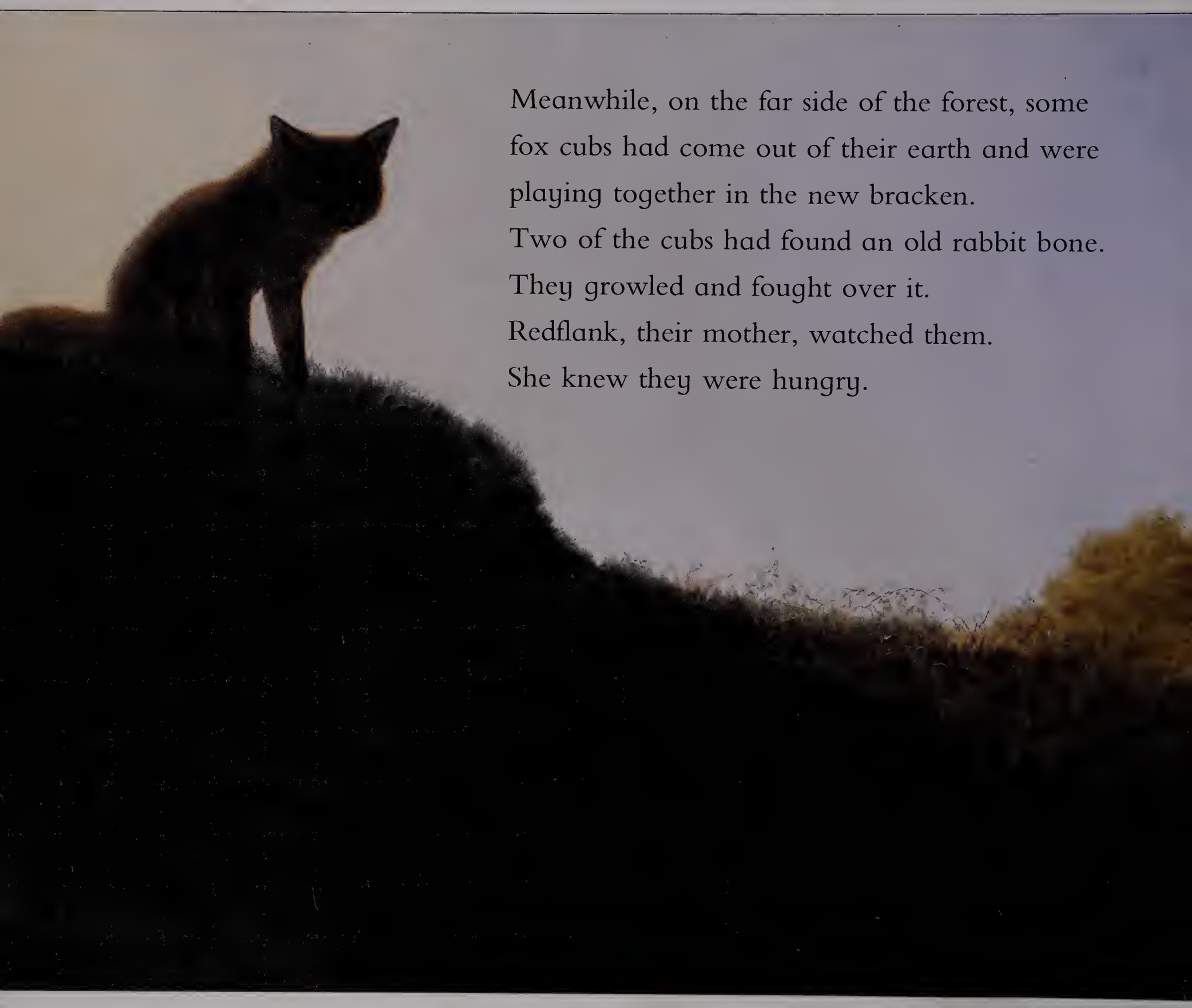
Shadow left the shelter
of the thicket and made her way through the
long undergrowth towards the old oak tree at the edge of the clearing.
She stood still for a moment - looking and listening for danger.
But everywhere was quiet. She moved across the clearing,
pulling at the long green grass.



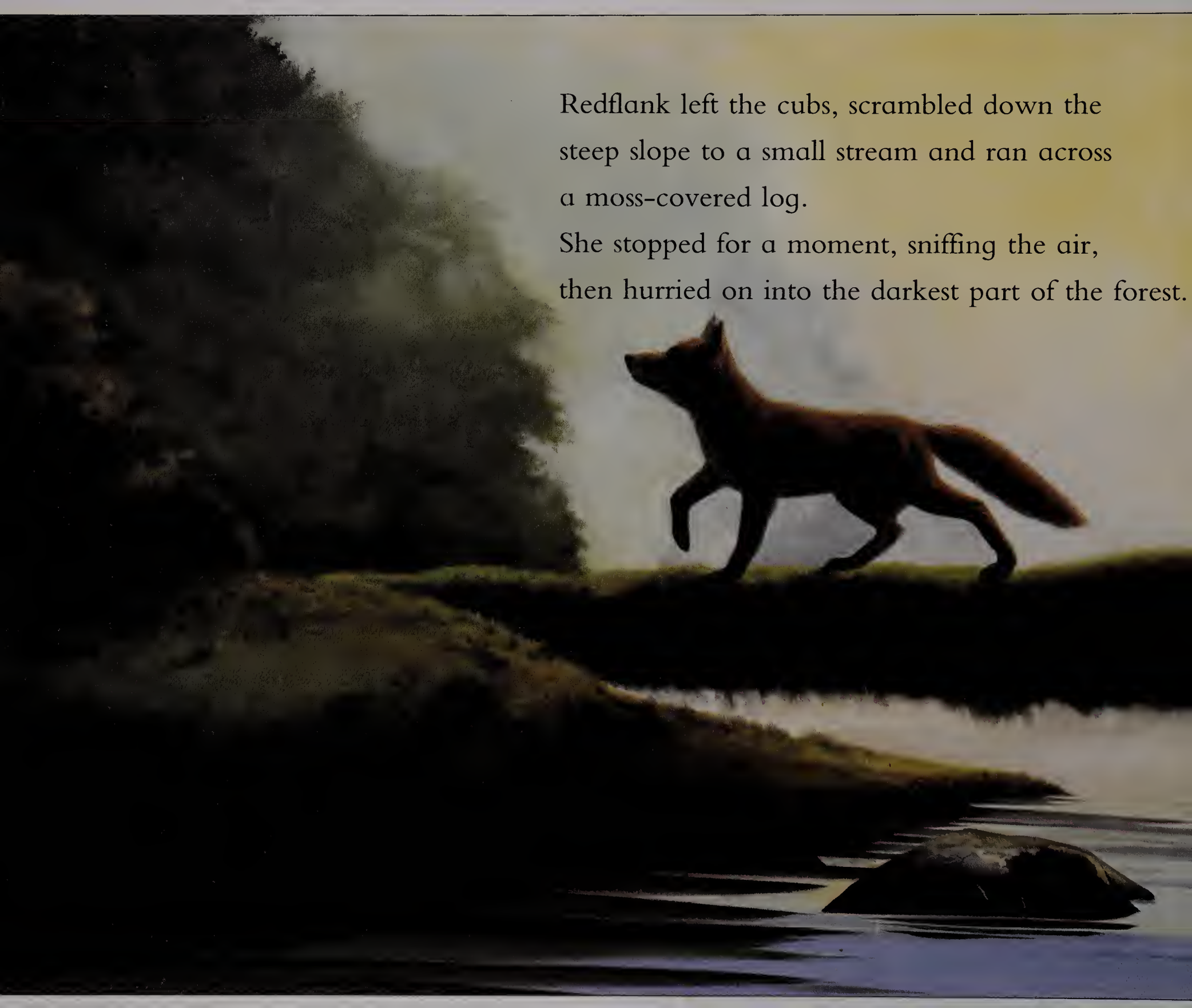
It began to rain softly.
Shadow lifted her head and looked back for a moment to where her fawn lay sleeping.
She wanted to go to him, but she knew she had to go on.
She was thirsty and she had to find water.
She slipped quickly and silently through the forest, towards the lake.

Shadow reached the lake and bent down to drink.
A bat swooped low over her head and startled her.
She drank quickly, anxious to get back to her fawn.

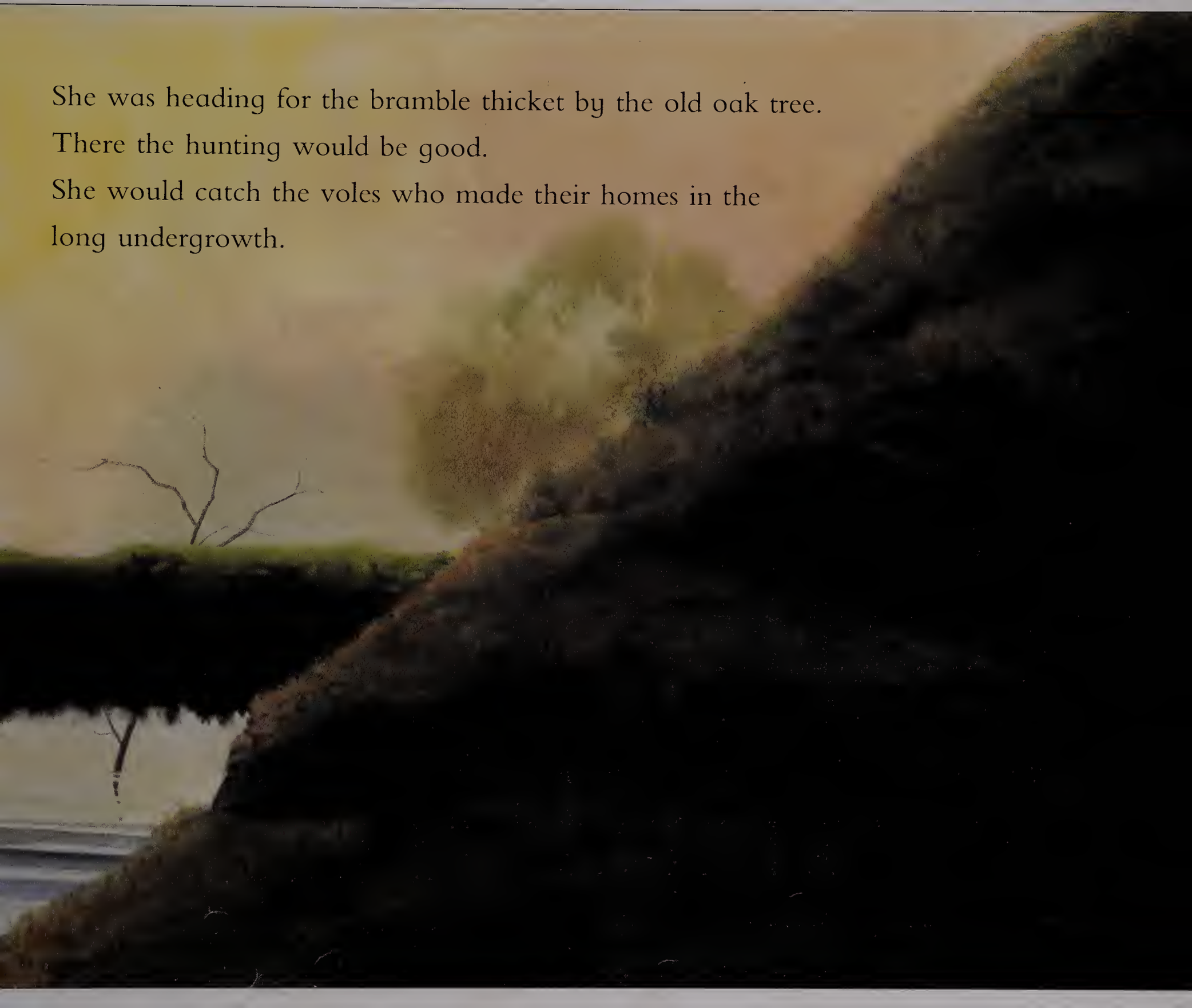




Meanwhile, on the far side of the forest, some fox cubs had come out of their earth and were playing together in the new bracken.
Two of the cubs had found an old rabbit bone.
They growled and fought over it.
Redflank, their mother, watched them.
She knew they were hungry.

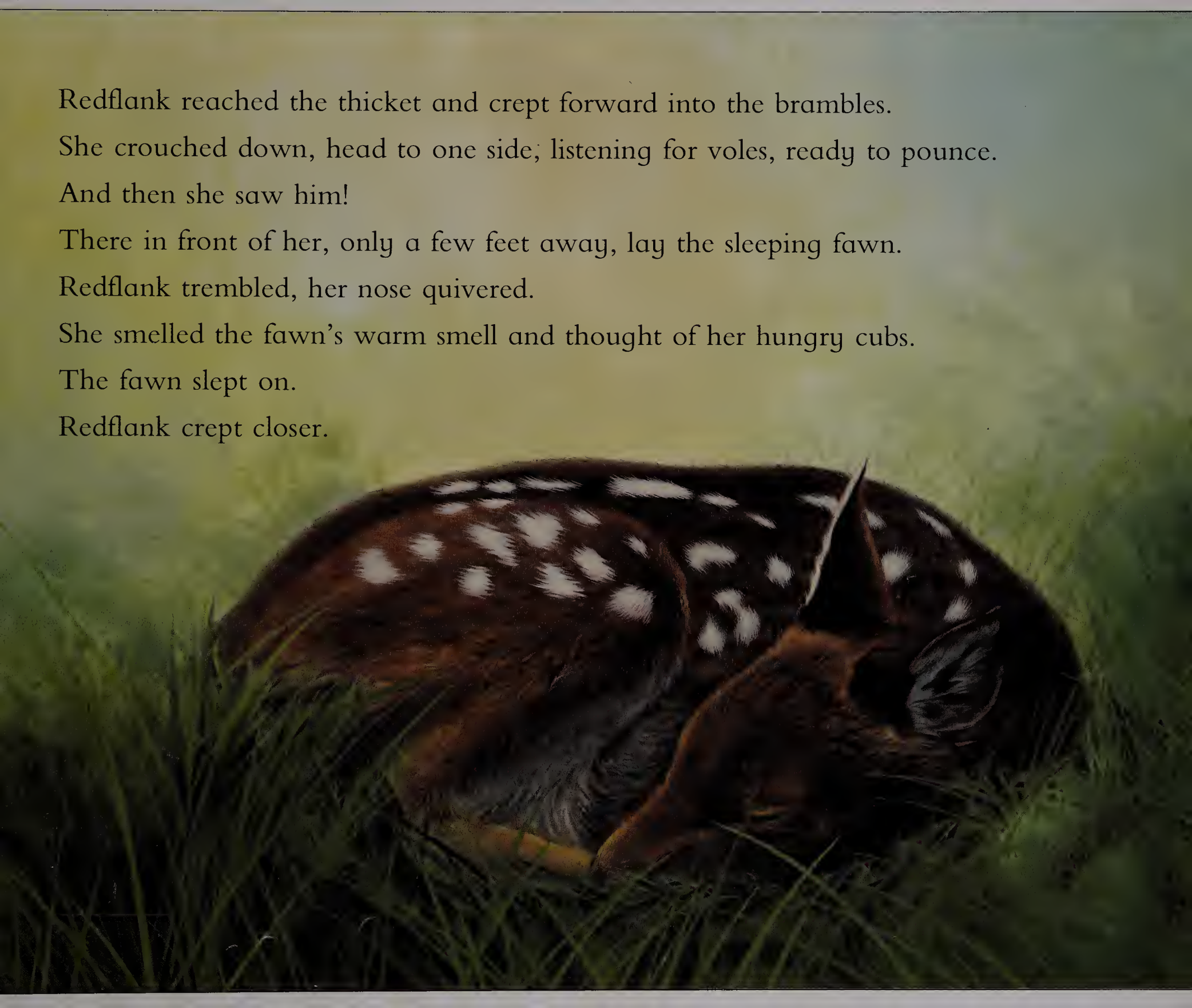


Redflank left the cubs, scrambled down the steep slope to a small stream and ran across a moss-covered log.
She stopped for a moment, sniffing the air, then hurried on into the darkest part of the forest.

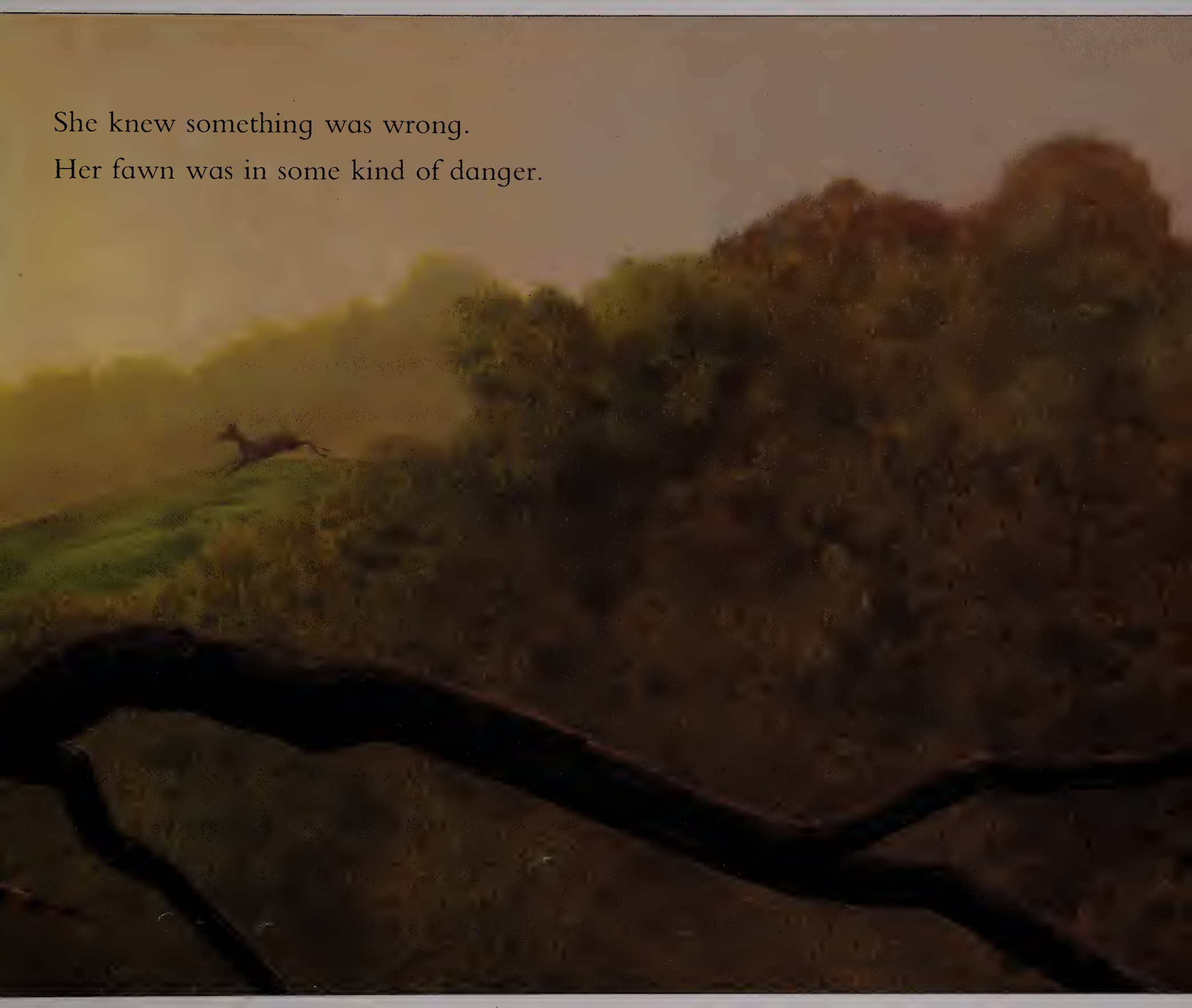


She was heading for the bramble thicket by the old oak tree.
There the hunting would be good.
She would catch the voles who made their homes in the
long undergrowth.

Redflank reached the thicket and crept forward into the brambles.
She crouched down, head to one side, listening for voles, ready to pounce.
And then she saw him!
There in front of her, only a few feet away, lay the sleeping fawn.
Redflank trembled, her nose quivered.
She smelled the fawn's warm smell and thought of her hungry cubs.
The fawn slept on.
Redflank crept closer.



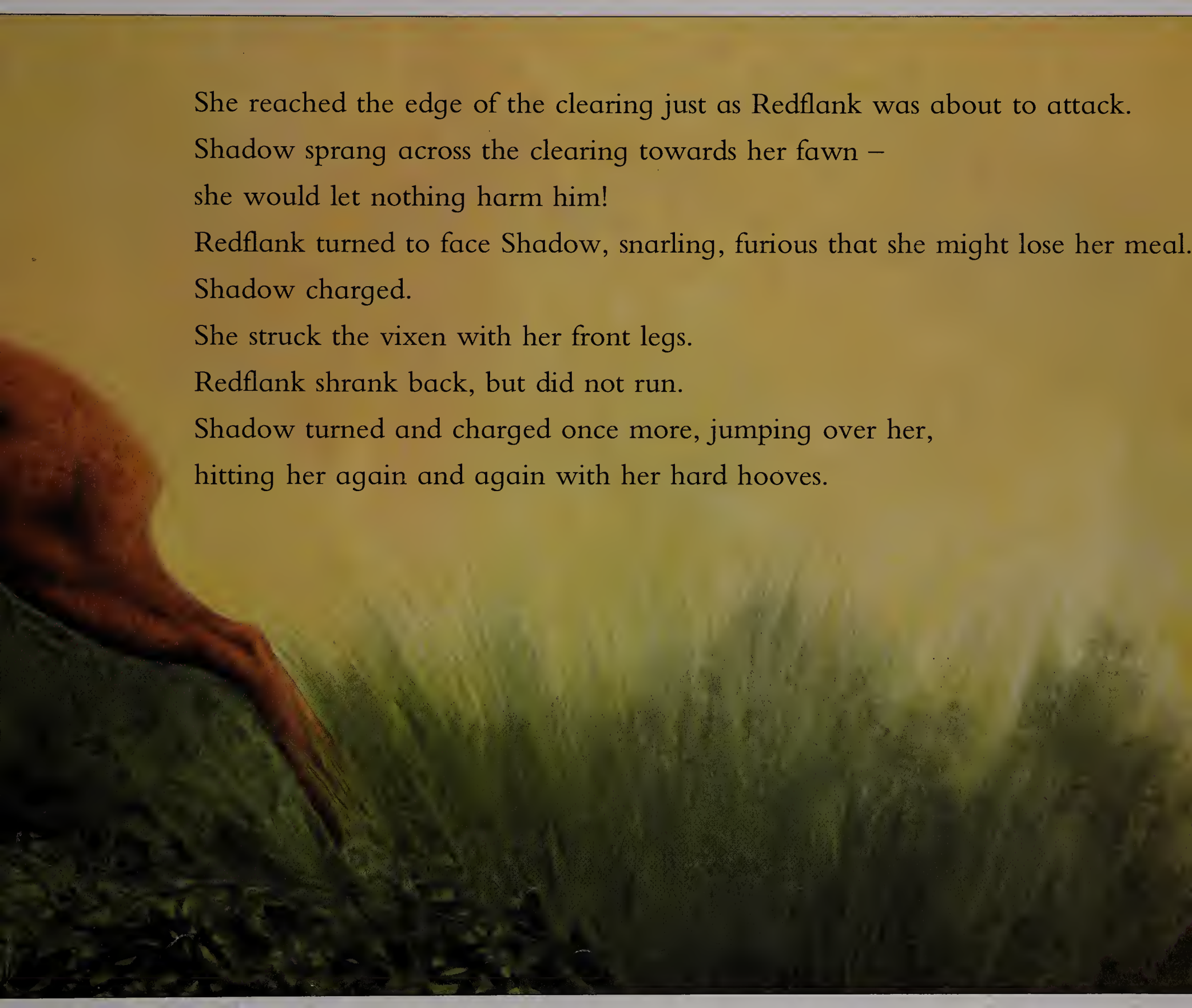
At this moment, Shadow was hurrying back towards the thicket. She heard a pheasant's harsh call of alarm.



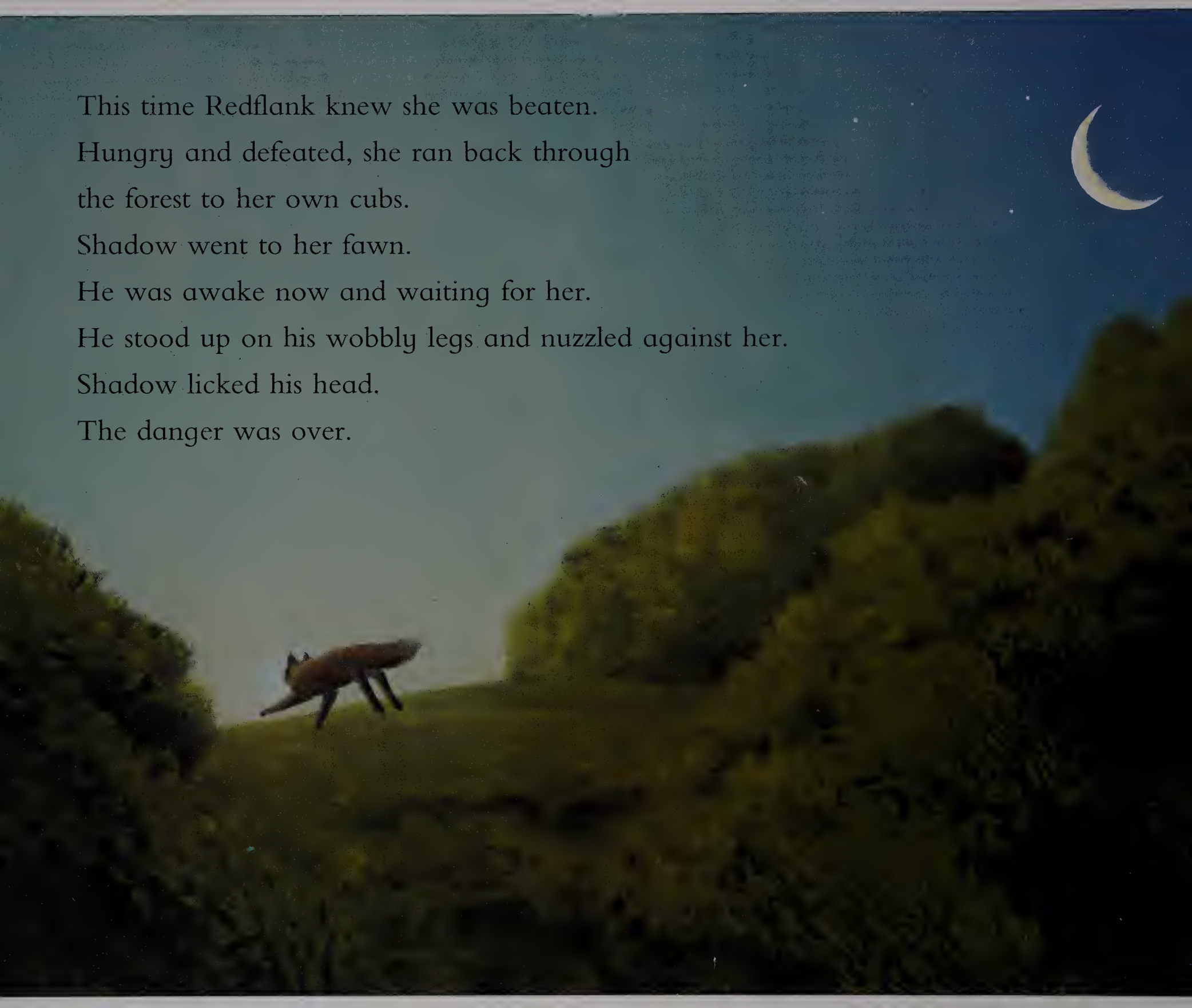
She knew something was wrong.
Her fawn was in some kind of danger.

He needed her, she had to get back to him.

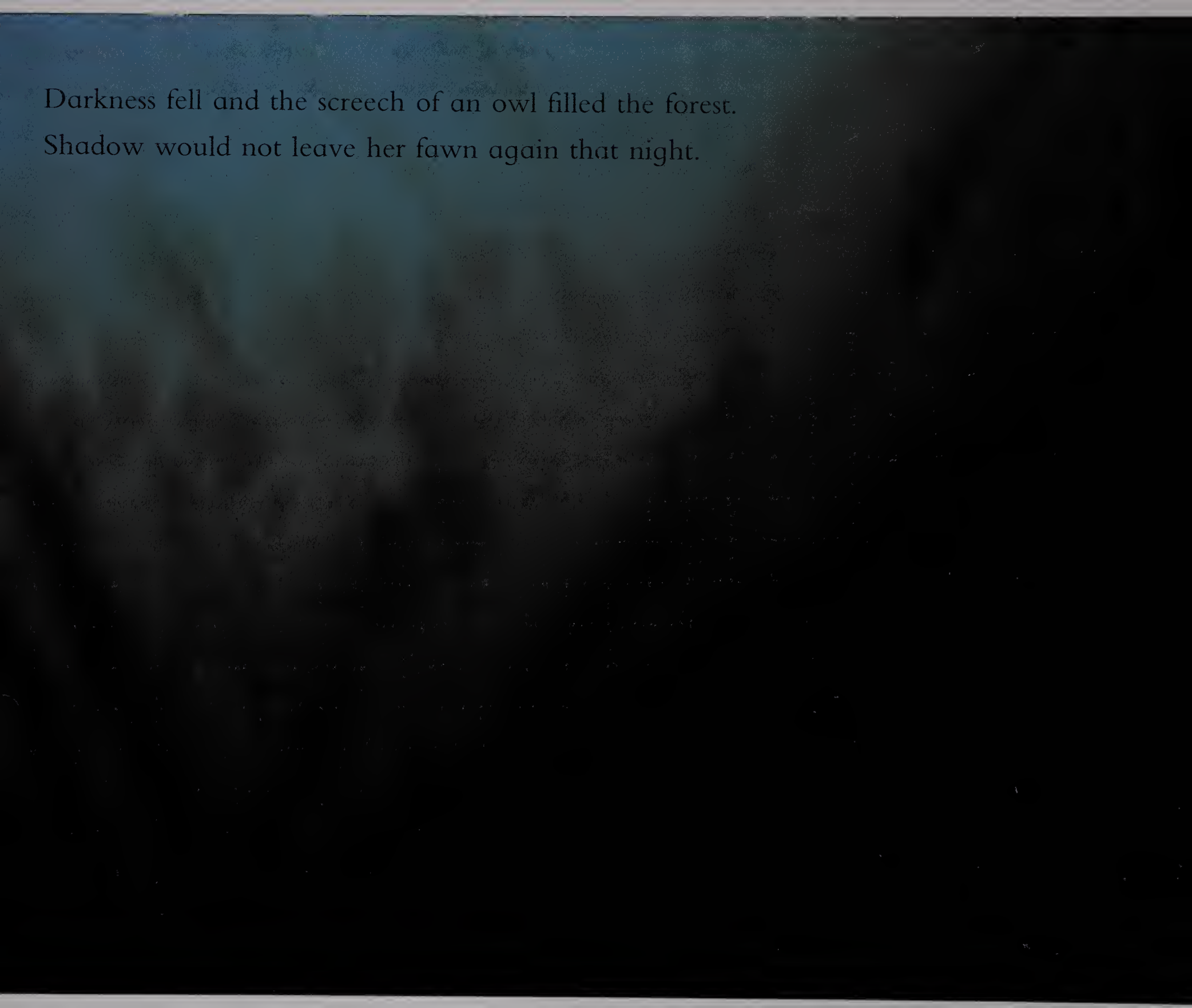
Faster and faster she ran through the forest.



She reached the edge of the clearing just as Redflank was about to attack.
Shadow sprang across the clearing towards her fawn –
she would let nothing harm him!
Redflank turned to face Shadow, snarling, furious that she might lose her meal.
Shadow charged.
She struck the vixen with her front legs.
Redflank shrank back, but did not run.
Shadow turned and charged once more, jumping over her,
hitting her again and again with her hard hooves.



This time Redflank knew she was beaten.
Hungry and defeated, she ran back through
the forest to her own cubs.
Shadow went to her fawn.
He was awake now and waiting for her.
He stood up on his wobbly legs and nuzzled against her.
Shadow licked his head.
The danger was over.



Darkness fell and the screech of an owl filled the forest.
Shadow would not leave her fawn again that night.

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Theresa Radcliffe worked as a teacher for many years before becoming a full-time writer. The story of *Shadow the Deer* was inspired by her great interest in wildlife and each detail was carefully researched before she began writing. Although she is the author of several nonfiction books for young readers, *Shadow the Deer* is Ms. Radcliffe's first picture book. She lives on a farm in North Humberside, England, with her husband and two sons.

John Butler has been interested in drawing and natural history since early childhood. The illustrator of more than 20 books on wildlife for young readers, his work has also been exhibited at the Natural History Museum in London and used by the Worldwide Fund for Nature. Mr. Butler lives in Kent, England, with his wife and two daughters.

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